

## Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W

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P 080701Z AUG 75

FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1450

S E C R E T ISLAMABAD 7272

NODIS

FOR THE SECRETARY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PK, US

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT FORD'S TRIP TO ASIA

1. I REGRET ADDRESSING YOU PERSONALLY AGAIN SO QUICKLY, BUT WHEN A PRIME MINISTER EXHIBITS THE DEGREE OF EMOTION THAT BHUTTO DID LAST NIGHT ON A MATTER AFFECTING US IT SEEMS BEST THAT YOU KNOW ABOUT IT.

2. THE SUBJECT WAS THE QUESTION OF THE PRESIDENT COMING TO THIS PART OF THE WORLD AND SKIPPING PAKISTAN DUE TO A DESIRE NOT TO VISIT INDIA BECAUSE OF CURRENT CONDITIONS THERE. IT TURNS OUT THAT I WAS IN SERIOUS ERROR IN TELLING THE DEPARTMENT I THOUGHT BHUTTO WOULD NOT BE TOO DIFFICULT TO HANDLE ON THIS ISSUE, AN IMPRESSION I GAINED WHEN HE APPEARED TO SHRUG THE MATTER OFF GOOD NATUREDLY IN A TELEPHONE CALL TO ME WHILE I WAS IN INDIANA.

3. BHUTTO MADE QUITE A LENGTHY SPEECH ON THE SUBJECT LAST NIGHT PRIOR TO DINNER, ADDRESSING HIMSELF NOT ONLY TO ME BUT HIS SEVEN INVITED DIGNITARIES AND THEIR WIVES. THE VISIT, HE SAID IN ESSENCE, WAS AN IMPORTANT ONE FOR PAKISTAN AND ONE WHICH HE AND THE PAKISTANI PEOPLE HAD LOOKED FORWARD TO WITH GENUINE PLEASURE. HE HAD EVEN ORDERED A MAJOR RECONSTRUCTION OF THE ISLAMABAD AIRPORT AND ITS ACCESS ROAD WITH THE TRIP IN VIEW. OUT ATTITUDE,

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HE SAID, GAVE THE IMPRESSION THAT WE REALLY DID NOT

CONSIDER PAKISTAN A TRULY INDEPENDENT COUNTRY, BUT AN ADJUNCT TO INDIA WHICH MUST ALWAYS BE TREATED IN THAT FASHION. HE WENT BACK TO PORTIONS OF YOUR COMMUNIQUE IN DELHI AND A SPEECH YOU HAD MADE THERE RECOGNIZING "INDIA'S SUPREMACY" IN THE SUBCONTINENT (I HAD TO CORRECT HIM UPON HIS CHOICE OF WORDS). HE ASKED RHETORICALLY HOW PAKISTAN COULD LOOK UPON ITSELF AS BEING A TRUE FRIEND AND ALLY OF THE UNITED STATES IF SUCH AN IMPORTANT THING AS THE VISIT OF OUR PRESIDENT TO PAKISTAN COULD BE HANDLED IN SUCH AS APPARENTLY OFF-HAND MANNER. HE REFERRED TO THE COMMUNIQUE ISSUED WHEN YOU WERE HERE AND THE SUBSEQUENT FORD-BHUTTO COMMUNIQUE IN WASHINGTON SAYING THAT HE WOULD PERSONALLY BE PLACED IN AN IMPOSSIBLE POSITION POLITICALLY WITH HIS OWN PEOPLE IF THE FORECASTS PROVE TO BE TRUE.

4. WHEN HE FINALLY PAUSED I TOLD HIM I WAS SURPRISED INDEED AT HIS REMARKS AND HIS APPARENT PERSONAL OFFENSE. I SAID I WOULD FIND THEM MORE UNDERSTANDABLE IF A VISIT TO PAKISTAN HAD BEEN FIRMED UP, WITH THE DATE PUBLICLY KNOWN, THEN PUBLICLY CANCELLED OUT BY US FOR THE REASONS HE HAD GIVEN. I STRESSED THAT NONE OF THIS WAS OF COURSE TRUE. THE FACTS WERE THAT THE PRESIDENT WAS RUNNING WELL BEHIND HIS PREVIOUS PLANS FOR THIS YEAR AND NOTHING HAD BEEN FIRMED UP AS YET EVEN ON A VISIT TO PEKING; LIKEWISE, THERE HAD BEEN NO EFFORT TO MAKE A DECISION AS YET AS TO WHAT OTHER COUNTRIES HE MIGHT VISIT IF AND WHEN HE DOES GO TO CHINA. IN ANY EVENT, THE WHITE HOUSE HAD TOLD ME THAT HE PROBABLY COULD NOT MAKE ANY TRIP IN THIS DIRECTION PRIOR TO DECEMBER AT THE EARLIEST. I THEREFORE THOUGHT HIS REACTION, AT THE VERY LEAST, WAS PREMATURE. NONE OF THIS SEEMED TO MOLLIFY HIM. I COULD HAVE DONE A BETTER JOB IF WE HAD BEEN ALONE AS I DID NOT WANT TO RISK A SERIOUS EMOTIONAL ARGUMENT IN FRONT OF OUR AUDIENCE AND AS I WAS HIS GUEST OF HONOR. THERE, OF COURSE, WILL BE ANOTHER OCCASION SOON TO TRY TO GET ACROSS THAT A BIT MORE OBJECTIVITY WOULD HELP BALANCE HIS OBVIOUSLY DEEP FEELINGS UPON THIS SUBJECT. I DOUBT I WILL BE TOO SUCCESSFUL, HOWEVER, SINCE HE IS ALREADY THOROUGHLY

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FAMILIAR WITH ALL OUR ARGUMENTS, HAVING BEEN BRIEFED BY YAQUB KHAN ON THE POINTS MADE BY INGERSOLL AND OTHERS ON THIS SUBJECT BEFORE HE LEFT WASHINGTON. IT SEEMS EVIDENT THAT POLITICAL ANIMAL BHUTTO BELIEVES THAT IN THIS ISSUE HE FACES SERIOUS POLITICAL LOSS AND STANDING WITH HIS OWN PEOPLE AND WITH OTHER LEADERS IMPORTANT TO HIM.

5. IF IT DOES TURN OUT THAT THE PRESIDENT SKIPS BOTH INDIA AND PAKISTAN, AND AS OF THIS TIME I AGREE THAT THE DECISION THAT HE DO SO IS THE CORRECT ONE, I HOPE SOMEONE MORE CAPABLE THAN I CAN THINK OF A PUBLIC STANCE THAT MAY HELP MITIGATE THE OBVIOUS ILL EFFECT HERE. AT THE VERY LEAST, UNDER THOSE CONDITIONS IT WOULD BE BEST FOR US-PAK RELATIONS IF THE PRESIDENT WENT IN THROUGH SHANGHAI AND VISITED NO OTHER COUNTRY. IN THIS CONNECTION, I TOLD INGERSOLL THAT I HAD HEARD A RUMOR THAT THE PRESIDENT MIGHT STOP OVER IN IRAN; THIS OF COURSE WOULD MAKE THINGS MUCH WORSE FROM BHUTTO'S POINT OF VIEW. I WANT TO ADD EMPHASIS TO THIS THOUGHT AS THERE CAN BE LITTLE DOUBT NOW THAT THE PRESIDENT FLYING OVER PAKISTAN FROM IRAN TO CHINA OR VICE VERSA WOULD HAVE A MOST SERIOUS IMPACT ON OUR RELATIONS HERE.

6. I KNOW YOU WILL HAVE TO TAKE MANY MATTERS INTO ACCOUNT AS YOU PLAN THE PRESIDENT'S CHINA TRIP. BUT IF BHUTTO PERSISTS IN HIS ATTITUDE, AND I THINK HE WILL, WE WILL HAVE A REAL PROBLEM OUT HERE WITH PAKISTAN OMITTED FROM THE ITINERARY, AND I'D HOPE YOU WOULD GIVE THESE SUGGESTIONS YOUR CAREFUL CONSIDERATION.  
BYROADE

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** FOREIGN RELATIONS, CHIEF OF STATE VISITS, BRIEFING MATERIALS, CAT-C  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 08 AUG 1975  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** CunninFX  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1975ISLAMA07272  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Film Number:** P850104-1507, N750003-0170  
**From:** ISLAMABAD  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
**ISecure:** 1  
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**Line Count:** 138  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM  
**Office:** ACTION NODS  
**Original Classification:** SECRET  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** NODIS  
**Page Count:** 3  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** SECRET  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** NODIS  
**Reference:** n/a  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** CunninFX  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 18 AUG 2003  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <18 AUG 2003 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <13 NOV 2003 by CunninFX>  
**Review Markings:**

Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
06 JUL 2006

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** PRESIDENT FORD'S TRIP TO ASIA  
**TAGS:** PFOR, OVIP, PK, US, (FORD, GERALD R), (BHUTTO, ALI)  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006